WHAT IS CLAIMED IS:

1. A method of treating a patient who has a tumor, or who is at risk of developing a tumor, the method comprising administering to the patient an agent that inhibits the expression or activity of at least one of osteopontin-b or osteopontin-c (OPN-b or OPN-c).

2. The method of claim 1, wherein the patient has a carcinoma, a sarcoma, a leukemia, or a lymphoma.

3. The method of claim 1, wherein the patient has a tumor of the prostate gland, colon, lung, breast, stomach, bladder, ovary, thyroid gland, pancreas or liver.

4. The method of claim 1, wherein the patient has a glioma or wherein OPN-b has the sequence of SED ID NO: 3.

5. The method of claim 1, wherein OPN-c has the sequence of SED ID NO: 5.

6. The method of claim 1, wherein the agent inhibits the expression of at least one of OPN-b or OPN-c.

7. The method of claim 1, wherein the agent enhances inclusion of at least one of exon 4 or exon 5 in osteopontin mRNAs; degrades or inhibitis at least one of OPN-b or OPN-c mRNA; or degrades or inhibits at least one of OPN-b or OPN-c protein.

8. The method of claim 7, wherein the agent enhances inclusion of at least one of exon 4 or exon 5 in osteopontin mRNAs by modulating the splicing activity of OPN pre-mRNAs.

9. The method of claim 6, wherein the agent is (a) an oligonucleotide having a sequence antisense to at least one of OPN-b or OPN-c mRNA, but not antisense to OPN-a mRNA, or (b) a ribozyme that specifically inhibits at least one of OPN-b or OPN-c expression.

10. The method of claim 9, wherein the ribozyme specifically targets a sequence at the exon 4/exon 6 splice junction of OPN-b mRNA or the exon 3/exon 5 splice junction of OPN-c mRNA.

11. The method of claim 9, wherein the oligonucleotide specifically targets a sequence at the exon 4/exon 6 splice junction of OPN-b mRNA or the exon 3/exon 5 splice junction of OPN-c mRNA.

12. The method of claim 6, wherein the agent is a small inhibitory RNA (siRNA) that specifically inhibits at least one of OPN-b or OPN-c expression.

13. The method of claim 12, wherein the siRNA is homologous to the exon 4/exon 6 splice junction of OPN-b or the exon 3/exon 5 splice junction of OPN-c mRNA.

14. The method of claim 6, wherein the agent is an aptamer.

15. The method of claim 6, wherein the agent is an anti-OPN-b or anti-OPN-c antibody.

16. The method of claim 6, wherein the agent is a peptide or chemical compound.

17. The method of claim 1, wherein the agent is administered in conjunction with a chemotherapeutic compound, a radiation therapy, or a surgical procedure designed to excise the tumor.

18. A method for identifying an agent that inhibits the expression or activity of at least one of OPN-b or OPN-c, the method comprising:

a. providing a test compound,
b. administering the test compound to a cell, and

c. evaluating the level of OPN-b or OPN-c expression or activity, a decrease in expression or activity indicating that the test compound is an agent that inhibits the expression or activity of OPN-b or OPN-c.

19. The method of claim 18, wherein the test compound is an oligonucleotide having a sequence that is antisense to OPN-b or OPN-c mRNA, but not antisense to OPN-a mRNA; a ribozyme that specifically inhibits at least one of OPN-b or OPN-c expression; an siRNA that specifically inhibits OPN-c expression; or an aptamer, antibody, peptide or chemical compound that specifically inhibits at least one of OPN-b or OPN-c expression.

20. The method of claim 19, wherein the oligonucleotide or ribozyme specifically targets a sequence at the exon 4/exon 6 splice junction of OPN-b mRNA or the exon 3/exon 5 splice junction of OPN-c mRNA.

21. The method of claim 20, wherein the siRNA is homologous to the exon4/exon 6 splice junction of OPN-b mRNA or the exon 3/exon 5 splice junction of OPN-c mRNA.

22. The method of claim 18, wherein the level of at least one of OPN-b or OPN-c expression is determined by RT-PCR, Northern blot analysis, RNAse protection assay, or Western blot analysis.

23. The method of claim 18, wherein the cell is a cell in culture.

24. The method of claim 18, wherein the cell is a cell *in vivo.*

25. The method of claim 18, wherein the cell naturally expresses at least one of OPN-b or OPN-c.

26. The method of claim 18 or claim 25, wherein the cell includes an exogenous sequence encoding at least one of OPN-b or OPN-c.

27. A method for determining whether a tumor is malignant, the method comprising providing a sample of the tumor and determining whether cells within the tumor express at least one of OPN-b or OPN-c, expression of OPN-b or OPN-c being an indication that the tumor is malignant.

28. The method of claim 27, wherein expression of at least one of OPN-b or OPN-c is determined by RT-PCR, Northern blot analysis, RNAse protection assay, or Western blot analysis.